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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

God, our guide, we know not what a day may bring. We are grateful for the knowledge that You guide our steps and direct our paths.

As our lawmakers face the challenges of their work, give them the wisdom to know and do Your will. Open their minds and hearts to the movement of Your providence, providing them grace for every exigency, disappointment or fulfillment, sorrow or joy. Lord, guide our lawmakers that they may be just in purpose, wise in counsel, and unwavering in duty. May they uphold the honor of our Nation and secure the protection of our people.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COTTON). The majority leader is recognized.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—H.R. 3231

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I understand there is a bill at the desk due a second reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bill by title for the second time.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 3231), to amend title 5, United States Code, to protect unpaid interns in the Federal Government from workplace harassment and discrimination, and for other purposes.

Mr. MCCONNELL. In order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to further proceedings.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection having been heard, the bill will be placed on the calendar.

WRDA

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, last night I took action to move to the 2016 Water Resources Development Act, an important authorization bill supporting our Nation's waterways. Chairman INHOFE has worked across the aisle with Ranking Member BOXER to craft this bipartisan bill, and I hope we can reach an agreement to pass it very soon.

ZIKA VIRUS, VETERANS, AND DEFENSE FUNDING

Mr. MCCONNELL. Now on another matter entirely, last night Senate Democrats blocked critical funding for veterans, for pregnant mothers and babies, and for servicemembers. It is not the first time or even the second time they have put partisan politics ahead of the health and safety of the American people; it is now the third time. Why Democrats would filibuster critical funding for Zika control at a time when cases are growing is really inexplicable. Why Democrats would filibuster critical funding for defense at a time when threats are growing is absolutely inexcusable.

In case colleagues across the aisle have missed it, here is the latest on the spread of Zika: There are now more than 2,700 cases in our country. More than 30 of those are likely local mos-

quito-borne cases. Yet, instead of acting with urgency to approve funding to combat Zika, Democrats have chosen once again to filibuster it.

In case colleagues across the aisle have missed this, too, here is the latest on the global changes facing us: North Korea continues to show signs of aggression with its recent tests of another missile. Iran continues to provoke our ships in the Persian Gulf—actions the commander of the U.S. Central Command called “very concerning.” ISIL continues to inspire and call for terror attacks around the globe, from a wedding in Turkey, to a church in France, to a nightclub in Orlando. Yet, instead of acting with urgency to approve funding to confront these threats, Senate Democrats have chosen once again to filibuster the Defense bill as well.

It really makes you scratch your head when the Democratic leader boasts how he has led such a cooperative minority. In what sense? Democrats have used the filibuster to blow up a bipartisan appropriations process for 2 years in a row now—2 years in a row. That is not my definition of a cooperative minority. They have bragged openly about their filibuster summer strategy. They have filibustered to protect executive overreach that even fellow Democrats claimed to oppose. They have even filibustered legislation designed to help victims of modern-day slavery, if you can believe that. Once again, they are filibustering to block funding for Zika control, for veterans, and for our men and women in uniform.

We hear the Democratic leader say he wants his party to do away with the filibuster altogether if Democrats win back control of the Senate. If he is so concerned about this abuse, maybe he should stop abusing it himself. Stop filibustering critical resources for Zika. Stop filibustering help for veterans. Stop filibustering the funding for our men and women in uniform because they count on us.

● This “bullet” symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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